1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

868 himself and his dependents. Thus, during childhood, he begins to participate in the hunting, gardening, and collecting occupations of his parents.

Even as an infant a Kwoma has begun his training in working for food by learning to clamber to his mother's breast. Later, during weaning, habits of helping himself to food and eating have been developed. Now the whole cycle of planting and harvesting, hunting and fishing, collecting and processing, unfolds before him, and little by little he learns to participate in one or another segment of these activities.

[252] A child learns that most of his food must be cooked before he can eat it and that if he wishes to eat between meals he [264] must learn this technique himself. At any time of the day [372] boys may roast a bunch of plantains or a breadfruit. Sometimes they build up the fire on the hearth of their mother or older sister, but more frequently they cook their snacks in groups of two or three in the forest. They learn to cook by watching and imitating their mother, and by trial and error.

[86] Girls, in addition to this, are specifically trained. They are told by their mothers what to do and criticized if they do not do it correctly. Boys also receive some specific training if they try some of the more complicated dishes such as gruel or 868 soup. Both girls and boys are expected to help their mother 857 when she is cooking the main meal, standing ready to pass [415] her a utensil or to fetch the bamboo water container. She is severe with her children for negligence in helping her, scolding them if they do not carry out her orders. Kaya, for example, severely reprimanded Mey for bringing her the old mixing sticks when she wanted the new ones.

[312] Since water and firewood are necessary for cooking, a sup- [313] ply must be kept constantly to hand. This is woman's work, [562] and consequently does not affect the boys.[6] A girl in the childhood age group accompanies her mother to the spring and brings back a small bamboo of water, and also forages for firewood with her mother. Older girls, though still in the childhood age group, are often given the responsibility of

[6] A boy will occasionally help his sister fetch water or firewood as a favor to her, but not as a duty.

123 There was an interesting occurrence when we were giving out the laplaps. We had just cut the last one that was wanted when up stepped Hamb, a youth of about seven who always went around naked as the others of his age. I couldn't help laughing at this and said, "Oh, come now Hamb, you don't want a laplap". The Washuk joined in the kidding and laughter, and as a result the poor boy was quite put out and began to look very hurt and tears came to his eyes. Whether or not the others would have kidded him without my starting it or not, I don't know. Anyhow, I felt sorry for him and gave him a small piece of cloth.

After the payment was all settled and everyone seemed to be satisfied; I walked down the hill to the stream to bathe. On the way, several of the Washuk "finished timers" spoke to me in a hushed voice as if they were telling me a secret of great importance. They said there was to be a "singsing" the day after tomorrow at Bongus and that we could watch it. I thanked them and am looking forward to the event.

October 13, 1936.

114 Yesterday passed rather uneventfully except that I tried to make a deck chair with a piece of canvas and some saplings bound together. I didn't have enough canvas to finish it, and the part that I did finish was rather rickety. Hamb said it was no good and to throw it away, and I guess he was right. At lunch, I was determined to try the gypsy stove which we had brought with us. Hamb had refused to use it, considering his open fire much better. I transferred some embers from the fire to the stove and tried to kindle them in the stove. Some of the Washuks were watching and took over after my unsuccessful attempts. To make a fire 372 they put a live ember under a little pile of dry chips, and after blowing on it, very shortly have a flame going. For firewood they use a very dry

372 brittle wood, dead and somewhat wormeaten. They break the wood in length varying from two to four feet and place it on the ground radially from a center. The fire burns only at the end of the logs with practically no flame or smoke, but with intense heat. As the logs burn, they are pushed toward the center of the fire. I can't decide whether it is the type of wood or the arrangement of it that produces such a fire.

114 I put some potatoes in the oven to bake and then some time later asked Kumb where the pigeon was. He had shot one the night before, and I had mentioned that I was going to roast it. He had thought I was kidding evidently, for it was already in his pot over the open fire. This was somewhat disconcerting, but as it turned out to be very tasty--probably more so than my attempt would have been--he couldn't but be forgiven. Kumb is a good cook. Since it was very hot after lunch, Tip and I both lay down, read, and dozed.

796 Today was the first day of the "singsing". Before we had finished [123] breakfast, the gongs began beating. Soon after we finished eating and had treated the sores of a couple of youths that had come in, we started off to observe the ceremony. We were accompanied by Ear and Kumb who volunteered to show us the way. They led us down the north side of the mountain almost 346 to the edge of the sago plain--about a mile from our house. When we arrived, a couple of the "finish timers" came out and escorted us into the house tamberan.

The roof is arched; the ridgepole slants from the back to the front, where an extension overhangs the front of the building. The roof form is the same as the Purari delta type, but the building is not on piles. In the center of the house tamberan was an altar formed from a pile of yams and taro enclosed in a diamond-shaped kind of wicker basket. It was

796 come by going home to sleep. This day is for rest. Tomorrow the singsing
346 will go on to its conclusion."

The "singsing" did not go on, however. It was postponed because one of
755 the Bongus men was very sick, and all attention was turned to beating the
754 gongs against poison. This was going on when I returned along with a lot
[796] of talk about the evils of poison, and not knowing what the place was
coming to with so much of it being practiced. Two men have died within
[123] a month, and now another one from the same sib is about to go. Tip went
to look at this man before we went to Ambunti and gave him some quinine. The
[753] next day he was better, and we thought he was cured. It seems, however,
that the natives are so sure that he is poisoned that they are turning their
attention to it rather than asking for more medicine.

[752] The poison situation was further aggravated by the fact that two days
ago a young "monki" from Waskuk was cutting wood with his father and a tree
fell on him and crushed his skull. He is still alive, but there is no hope
for him. The natives recognize this as an accident, but now the Waskuk
[123] gongs are beating against poison. We have had no direct evidence that we
are considered responsible for the bad luck that seems to have hit the tribe,
but it would be peculiar if some did not think that we were the cause of it.
They always deny this if directly questioned. Last night Kum told Wis not
to allow any old men into his house or he might be poisoned. This is all
a very interesting situation, and when we know the language a little better,
we can understand more about it.

114 November 10, 1936. Yesterday afternoon we were sitting out in front of our
[372] house with a group of natives. [We have fixed up a small courtyard there
and built a little fire in the center of it, for this seems to be an essential
part of a native gathering. They use it to dry their tobacco and light
their cigarettes.]

that he was not a big man but a "wonki nothing", and he couldn't look out for the place. Kar had said, "All right, Maski, you think me no big fela man," (All right, never mind, you think I'm not a big man) and the next day had delivered an ultimatum that no one was to go with Bob. Just before Bob left, he had confronted Bob and asked him if he still thought him "something nothing", and Bob had answered somewhat ironically--"No, you're a big mari" (woman). Kar has spoken of this episode three times now, and it evidently rankled strongly.

Kar said that War had told him that I had come to visit him yesterday and had said that if I were "black skin" he would have given me a lot more food, but being a white man, he didn't know whether I would like it or not, and had been afraid to offer it to me. He had been a bit worried whether I had thought him ungenerous and had asked Kar his opinion of the matter.

February 3, 1937. I went down to Way's in the afternoon. He had a pain in the testicles and sent word that he would like some medicine. He was sitting on the porch and explained about his pain. His wife, who was standing holding her child (4months) also explained about his pain, pointing to his testicles while he was holding them up for inspection. There was no embarrassment on the part of either. I gave him an empirin tablet. They were burning a palm frond bundle and also a heap of coconuts. The house was full of smoke.

Then I went to War's house. His wife was sitting on one porch making a net bag with her daughter. War was on the other porch. The houses almost touch and are directly facing each other. War was boiling sago, and he gave War some food. A storm came up, so all of them moved into the next porch. War stood near the edge scowling, spitting, and mumbling. May also spit and mumbled.

578 seems that War wants to kill them, and Wof takes a negative attitude. His garden is next to Yelagu, and if War made a raid, it wouldn't be safe to work there. War then accused Wof of telling the Tug men of War's plans, and thus thwarting his plans because of the close connection between Tug and Yelagu. Wof denied it, and so the argument continues.

114 [372] [136] [578] I went down to Wof's house tonight after supper; people were sitting around the fire burning mosquitoes off their legs with a torch. Wof, who was at the house tamberan called Sin sin sin (greetings) very loudly. Kaya repeated this mockingly.

534 476 April 13, 1937. Afak and Pokotay are helping with the gong. Wof is conspicuously absent. He says he has to look out for food, and it's not his gong anyway. (Strain over the yelagu affair I think). Way is also absent (due to knife stealing I think). I haven't seen him since I got back.

123 863 Chinuwe and Kum slept under the mosquito net enclosing the dining work room in my house last night, and Kum wet the floor. Kwiya and Afinok came this morning and were much upset about this, said they were going to spank Kum for it, and helped clean it up.

857 Marok came into the house and pounded Afi on the back a couple of times asking her what she was doing playing about when she should be working, getting firewood, etc. She ran away and down to the house.

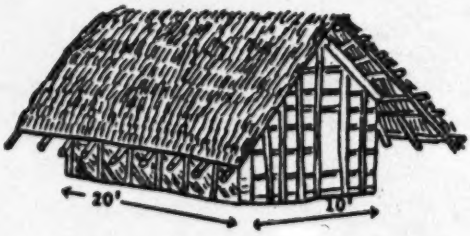
224 784 226 [177] Mas is now our shoot boy, as Naub has quit. Yesterday Mas killed two gouria pigeons and this morning killed another one. Yat told him that he could not eat any. Mas realised that he should not eat them because he had killed them, but Owiyap and Mar said that killing them with a musket was different from killing them with a spear, and that therefore it was all right. Mas was not convinced, however, and this morning he came out with the rationalization that Naub had continually missed shots because he had eaten birds he had shot.

Chapter V
Field Notes Not Previously Published

House and building construction

342 [428] [423] [372] Houses are not permanent enough to be important in inheritance. If a man dies, the remainder of the family lives in his house until it falls down or begins to leak. The house, however, is considered to be the property of the male children. A house may last ten years, and is abandoned when it falls apart. The available timber is used for other purposes-- firewood, for example.

343 342 The figure below illustrates a house for storing yams and taro (kayakd) but is identical in construction to a dwelling house.



There are two central posts at either end of the outside room. The roof overhangs in either direction. The construction is identical to the room of a dwelling house. The porches are extended from this frame.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 173]